

Bentley announces *Reach Out* initiatives starting with the first one: *Reach Out for Conflict Resolution*

It is my great pleasure to be back on campus. I am honored to take on the role of the Ombuds person for Bentley University. The purpose of this email is to introduce you to initiatives that build upon our values and to ask you to consider participating.

The first initiative will focus on addressing challenging situations and resolving conflict in a constructive manner. We are calling it *Reach Out Week for Resolution*, scheduled to take place the week of February 11, 2019.

Other *Reach Out* initiatives will be announced soon after. They will focus on giving a compliment, *Reach Out Week to Compliment*; on expressing appreciation, *Reach Out Week to Express Appreciation*; on sharing our involvement in non-profit organizations, *Reach Out Week to Share My Non-Profit*.

What will the first ***Reach Out Week look like?*** It will be a regular Bentley week. The only difference is that it is a week that we are strongly encouraged to reach out to address and peacefully resolve a misunderstanding or a conflict we currently have or had in the past, no matter how insignificant or small.

When addressed and managed properly, disagreements and conflicts can benefit both individuals and organizations. They can enable mutual respect, better ideas, higher productivity, better understanding and a greater chance of success.

On any day, but especially during *Reach Out Week for Resolution*, we are encouraged to make an effort to work things out. We can start by sending an email or by making a phone call. We can let the person know we are reaching out with a promise to keep an open mind and to listen to what he/she has to say. We can join forces to identify solutions so that we can move forward in a more positive and productive way.

If you are interested in reaching out to someone in the Bentley community, why not forward this email and ask "would you like to meet for coffee/tea this week to discuss "the issue?"".

If you are the recipient of such an email or call, I encourage you to keep an open mind. If you prefer not to accept the invitation, please acknowledge the outreach and politely let the person know that although you appreciate the effort, timing is not good for you. To the initiator, I urge you not to see failure if your request is rejected and to see it as a first step in doing the right thing to resolve the conflict.

The Ombuds Office is here to help you initiate that conversation. It is an office for you. All inquiries and conversations are kept confidential. I am available and happy to meet or speak with you at your convenience.

The coming *Reach Out Weeks* will help us all better appreciate the superior quality of our faculty, staff and students. As one of the nation's leading business schools, Bentley University is committed to promoting deep technical skills, a broad global perspective, and high ethical standards. *Reach out Weeks* will help us combine these skills in a manner which not only facilitate success in business but also continue to empower our Bentley community and our graduates to make critically important and positive contributions to our society in an ever-changing world.

As the Ombuds person, it will be my pleasure to facilitate that path to continued success. Please join me for one of the brief conflict management workshops scheduled on February 12, and February 13th at 2:30pm at LaCava 325A. I can be reached by email (emarkoff@bentley.edu) or by phone at 781 891 3102. My office is at Smith 204.

All my best,
Eliane Markoff
University Ombuds